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THE BAPTIST

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Bangladesh aid campaign deemed 'critical'

GARGARI UNION, Bangladesh (BP) — If anyone understands the pain survivors of Hurricane Mitch are suffering in Central America, it's Nazim Uddin of Bangladesh.

The gray-bearded, 60-year-old Muslim day laborer saw his home and livelihood washed away — not for the first time, possibly not for the last — by the worst flooding in the history of this flood-prone land.

Uddin now toils nine hours a day to help build a five-kilometer road in north-west Bangladesh, where months of flooding started in July. With several hundred other workers, he hauls basket after 80-pound basket of sandy soil on his head and dumps them onto the new road site.

The effort is one of many food-for-work projects being funded by Southern Baptists to help 16 districts of Bangladesh rebuild.

It's hard work for the aging Uddin, but he's glad to get it — and the five kilos of rice a day that come with it. The project is helping keep him and his 10-member family from starving.

For Uddin's family and millions of others like them, "the next six months will be critical," says Southern Baptist missionary James Young. "For two months they were knee-deep, waist-deep, chest-deep in water" — and it destroyed their homes, their jobs and much of their farmland. It

will be spring before a new rice crop can be harvested.

The crucial question, according to Young: How do they survive until harvest? If they had the funds, Baptists could easily help 1,000 eager, hungry workers every day on the Gargari road project alone.

Crew chiefs have to turn away hundreds who line up daily. At least 50,000 mostly homeless and jobless people are in the area of Rajshahi district surrounding the road.

"The problem is selecting who will work," says Southern Baptist missionary R. T. Buckley. "We try to hire one for two days, then another for two days, so food gets around to more families."

The Southern Baptist International Mission Board sent more than \$600,000 in hunger and disaster relief funds to Bangladesh in late September. Missionaries are using the money to aid thousands of families in 16 districts through:

- Food-for-work projects where possible. The projects feed people as they help rebuild roads and bridges, clean silt from farm fields and fishponds, and repair other infrastructure.

- Distributing food where necessary, along with seeds, medicine and oral rehydration packets. The Christian medical organization MAP International bolstered the



RICE FOR LIFE — Five precious kilos of rice are measured out to Bangladeshis hired onto a food-for-work road-building project funded by Southern Baptists. Flooding destroyed an estimated 16,000 kilometers of roads and 6,000 bridges in Bangladesh. It also destroyed nearly an entire rice crop and prevented the planting of another — leaving behind millions of homeless, jobless, and hungry people. (BP photo by Roy M. Burroughs)

Southern Baptist effort with nearly \$500,000 worth of medicine and rehydration supplies.

- Installing sanitary latrines to prevent the spread of disease.

- Sinking hundreds of emergency tube wells to provide clean drinking water, and testing hundreds of existing wells for bacterial and arsenic contamination.

Southern Baptists donated two water purification units to the government, which can provide clean water for up to 30,000 people a day.

"Muslims often think Christians are their enemies," says Baptist leader Peter Halder. "We want to say, 'No. We love you. We want to help you.'"

Southern Baptists who want to contribute to the Bangladesh relief effort can send gifts designated for "general relief" to: Southern Baptist World Relief, Office of Finance, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230.

Working

Lottie Moon
Christmas Offering for
International Missions

NATIONAL GOAL:
\$110,000,000



NEW WELL — Muddy water spurts from the top of a pipe as a worker helps sink a new tube well in rural Bangladesh. Southern Baptist missionaries have sunk hundreds of tube wells in Bangladesh over the years (BP photo by Roy M. Burroughs)

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

Mississippi provides relief

Names in the News

Just for the Record

Sunday School lessons

Christmas

Christmas

Christmas

Christmas

Christmas

Christmas

Christmas

Christmas

Christmas

Christmas

Christmas

Christmas

Christmas

Christmas

Looking back

10 years ago

Mississippi ranks seventh among Baptist state conventions in the number of study course awards given during the 1987-88 year, with 41,788, according to the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville. Hinds-Madison Association in Jackson is 17th among the top 25 associations.

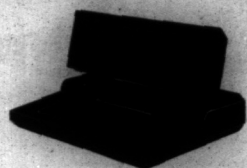
20 years ago

The Sunday School Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board leads all Baptist state conventions in number of associational Sunday School growth campaigns held (36). Leading the department is Bryant Cummings, along with consultants Billy Hudgens, Larry Salter, Judd Allen, and Mose Dangerfield.

50 years ago

The Ole Miss Baptist Student Union sends \$60 to the Relief Center in New Orleans to purchase medicine and food for the needy of post-World War II Europe — part of a statewide BSU drive for world relief. Marian Leavell is student secretary at Ole Miss.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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Bring on the new year!

Right on time again this year, the old man is on the way out and the new baby is on the way in. However, it seems 1998's old man is considerably more worn this time around — and it would appear that 1999's new baby is going to have to grow up in a hurry.

The New Year observance is designed from the start as a celebration to ring in the new and announce our confidence in the future. To Christians, however, it often appears to be a distressing continuation of too many years in the past.

In the nation's capitol, many elected leaders betray all the characteristics of arrested adolescence. In our state, the pervasive influence of legalized gambling continues to choke the life from our citizenry while fattening the state treasury.

In our cities and towns, innocent victims continue to die by the scores in order to cravenly protect anyone who demands "one more for the road." In our homes, parents dash madly after two-income wealth in the belief that children can raise themselves.

In our churches, more than a few have concluded that a once-a-week ritual gathering is appropriate substitution for what the Savior plainly called us to do (Matt. 28:18-20) —

that is, as long as it doesn't take more than an hour or so.

In our minds in many cases, we have been educated beyond our intelligence. In our hearts, far too many of us have said, "There is no God." (Ps. 14:1-3).

How can a nation long survive whose collective soul is so emptied of the things of God, year after year? We innately understand that 1999 will probably be a lot like 1998 — and if Jesus doesn't return before

12:01 a.m. on Dec. 31, that's not an appetizing prospect for Christians.

We can expect to be pilloried, even from within our own ranks, for believing there is absolute truth. We can anticipate criticism when we stand up and say, "That is wrong."

We can predict that we will be labeled as narrow-minded bigots for pointing out sin and calling it by its proper name. We can be sure we will be attacked for demanding our rightful place in the public marketplace of ideas.

In short, next year will be a lot like last year, and the year before, and the year before that *ad nauseam*.

As events over which we have no control swirl around us with tornadic velocity, it's easy for Christians to become discouraged at this time of year. How can we have faith in the future, when it so miserably resembles the past?

It's a good thing we have Jesus, isn't it?

As long as we have Jesus we can face an uncertain future, not in anxiousness but with confidence (Rom. 8:38).

As long as we have Jesus we know that no earthly power or riches can stand in opposition to the Good News (Eph. 1:18-22).

As long as we have Jesus we know we will be victorious over the forces of Satan that constantly seek to confuse and scatter us (1 Peter 5:8-11).

As long as we have Jesus, eternity is sealed (John 3:15).



So let us sweep out the old and welcome the new in 1999 — and every year until Jesus returns — with all the power and glory to which we were made heirs by the one true and living Son of the one true and living God.

In this complicated, noisy world of our own making, it doesn't get any simpler than that.

A PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE:



The ring of another axe

By Carl M. White, Associate Editor

Sometimes one hears a story of how events in someone's life came miraculously together, and the person telling the story says something like this: "Praise the Lord; God worked all this out."

I love stories like that. They inspire and motivate. Such stories make me believe anything is possible.

Then, while making my way down life's highway, I get down to the rough road of reality where there are potholes and detours. It causes me to wonder: If it happens so wonderfully for someone else, why are things so difficult for me? Is it because I don't have enough faith? Have I not prayed enough, been to church enough, put enough in the offering plate?

I am convinced that behind every "praise the Lord" that has ever been uttered there is a tear. Behind every glowing testimony lurks a time of doubt and soul-searching. When the Apostle Paul said we are to walk by faith and not by sight, he never indicated that it would be an easy walk.

Consider the story of one John Anderson. A worker in the coal mines of southern Illinois in the 19th century, John went to work before dawn, often not returning until after dark. Sometimes he went months without seeing the sun.

Like most miners of this era, he was in constant debt to the

company store. His future was as dark as the coal he mined.

John and his wife had a dream — to move west and homestead a piece of land for themselves and their growing family. After scrimping and saving for months, with his wife taking in extra washing for extra money, they settled accounts with the company store.

John kissed his wife and children good-bye and took a train to Merrill, Wisconsin. He walked 25 miles to claim a 40-acre tract of land in Ormsby. On his back he carried a 50-pound sack of meal, an axe, and a few other essentials. The woods were hot and humid, but John rejoiced in his new freedom from the semi-slavery of the mines.

Strong and tough, John began felling trees for the log house he would build for his family and to satisfy his claim on the land. To save pennies he did not purchase gloves, believing the calluses built up in the mines would protect his hands.

However, this work was different. The axe wore down his hands at different places than the pick he had used in the mines. In a short time, his hands were bleeding. The insects plagued him. He missed his wife and children. In the heat and humidity, his temper grew short.

The second day was unbearable. John had never been a profane man, but the pain and frustration eventually broke his resolve and the words echoed with the sound of his curses. On the third day, he could barely stand. His spirit and energy were at bottom.

He could take it no longer. His and his wife's dream of a log cabin on land of their own was only a fool's dream, John thought. He cursed himself as his shoulders shook. Great sobs racked his body. John cried out, "Please, God, help me. I can't take it any longer!"

For a long time John Anderson lay on the forest floor. He was a

beaten man. Then, faintly, through the whirl of the insects and the quiet forest sounds, he heard a different sound. God was answering his prayer.

Though it came from a long way off, there was no doubt about what it was. John heard the ring of another axe against wood. Somewhere in the forest another man was felling trees. Another father was struggling to make a home for his wife and children. Another man was dreaming the dream.

John got up, picked up his axe, and went back to work.

Years later John Anderson would bear witness to the glory of God, telling how that cabin was built and his family given a new home. His children and grandchildren never tired of hearing the story.

At church, everyone knew of John's prayer that day and of God's answer. It was one of those "Praise the Lord; God worked all this out," testimonies. Yet, as with most such stories, it was only through adversity and extreme distress that the answer came.

Perhaps the most meaningful witness any of us will ever share is a testimony of our faithful perseverance during difficult times. In your present struggle, whatever it may be, call out to God. He listens, and cares. In the distance, if you'll listen, maybe you too will hear the ring of another axe.

Courses to be offered in Mississippi by NOBTS

January 25 begins the seventh of eight courses at six locations in Mississippi sponsored by New Orleans Seminary, New Orleans (NOBTS).

The total eight courses are: Song Leading; Worship Planning; Reading Music; Rhythm/Pitch; Reading Music; Harmony/Melody; Hymnology; Music Administration/Staff Relations; Survey of Music Resources; Class Voice. These courses are designed to provide basic training for bivocational music directors and other music leaders in churches.

The eight courses meet two hours per week. Each course is

eight weeks in length.

The cycle of courses is scheduled over a two-year period. Each course is independent and has no prerequisite. Each student who completes the eight courses earns a Church Music Certificate from New Orleans Seminary plus a credit of eight hours toward an on-campus degree program. There is a one-time registration fee of \$25. The cost of each course is \$75.

The seventh course "Survey of Music Resources" will meet once a week for two hours for eight consecutive weeks at the following locations and times:

- Broadmoor Church, Jackson — beginning January 25 (7-9 p.m.) Jimmy McCaleb, teacher.
- First Church, Columbus — beginning January 28 (7-9 p.m.) Ed Nix, teacher.
- First Church, Purvis — beginning January 25 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) James Hayes, teacher.
- East McComb Church, McComb — beginning January 25 (7-9 p.m.) Joe Elliott, teacher.
- First Church, Booneville — beginning January 25 (7-9 p.m.) LuAnne Ford, teacher.
- Northcrest Church, Meridian — beginning January 25 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) Buddy McElroy, teacher.

These classes could be offered at other locations in the state also, where 10-12 students are interested in enrolling.

For more information, contact the College of Undergraduate Studies, NOBTS, 3939 Gentilly Boulevard, New Orleans, LA 70126. Telephone: (800) NOBTS01, extension 3323.

**THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE**

**THE BAPTIST
Record**

Miss. food, volunteers land in Honduras

By Tim Nicholas
MBCB Communications Director

Two teams of Mississippi Baptist disaster relief volunteers spent 11 days in Honduras on Nov. 24-Dec. 5, helping distribute nearly one million pounds of food sent there by Mississippians in the wake of Hurricane Mitch.

The first seven ocean-going containers of food — equal to seven tractor-trailer loads — have already been distributed to the needy hurricane victims in Honduras.

Jim Didlake, Mississippi Baptist disaster relief coordinator and incoming director of the Mississippi Brotherhood Department, was with the first group of Mississippi volunteers. He said he was told a story that he believes epitomizes the meaning of missions:

As the home of Pastor Rogeli Funez was being washed away, he picked up his three children. One child was on his back, the other two children under his arms.

He waded through the rising water, fighting the increasing current until he could resist no more. At the last moment when he realized that all of them were going under, someone threw them a rope to save their lives.

"That's what Mississippi Baptists do every time they respond to human needs," said Didlake.

The 12 volunteers divided their time between getting permission to unload the

shipping containers in which the food was brought, moving by hand — along with local volunteers — the 70-lb. boxes into a warehouse, and visiting areas where the food is being distributed.

Jerry Bishop, pastor of Linwood Church, Honduran volunteers unload 70-lb. boxes of emergency food supplies in 88-degree weather for temporary storage in donated warehouses in La Ceiba in northern Honduras. The food was distributed to Hondurans devastated by Hurricane Mitch. (BR special photo)



"That whole valley was flooded. Miles and miles of orange groves and African nut palms were wiped out," he reported.

Bishop said that in some villages he visited, the mud line was halfway up the walls — that is, the walls of homes still standing.

In one area where food was going to be delivered, about 26 people made professions of faith. "Enough to start a church there," he said.

"The real burden is that the people are hurting, and are going to be hurting worse. It's a long-term thing," Bishop said.

"The banana crops were totally destroyed. People were actually living in the median of the high-

way. Some have tents, lean-to's, tin, paste-board — anything they could find to keep the rain out."

Bill Lee, member of First Church, Brandon, was in the second group of volunteers. He said the devastation "was just unreal. A river 40 feet wide left a hole 3/4 of a mile wide."

Lee said 50-60 local church members helped the Mississippians unload several containers of food and supplies in 88-degree heat.

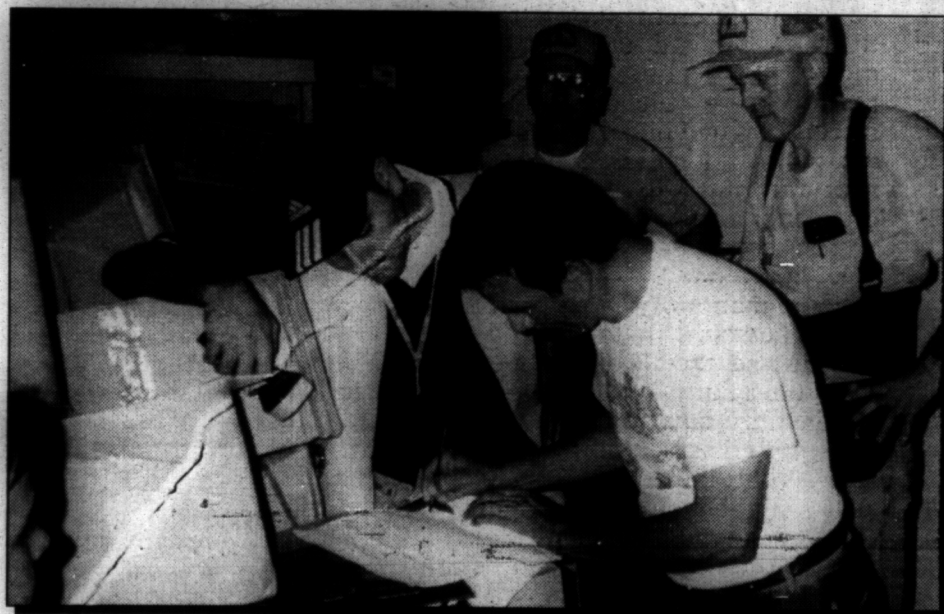
Didlake said plans are underway in cooperation with Southern Baptist International Mission Board missionary Ken Cummins to send construction and medical teams into Honduras during 1999. The construction teams will be rebuilding homes.

Some of the cash donated by Mississippi Baptists and others, totaling nearly a third of a million dollars, is in the hands of missionaries to provide for necessities such as sugar and coffee, bedding, kitchen supplies, and building materials for home repair.

Didlake noted that members of the Mississippi Baptist Agricultural Missions Fellowship are preparing a seed corn ministry to help local farmers replace seed supplies and crops lost to the severe weather.

Didlake said that when the Hondurans realized the second group of Mississippians had completed their food distribution work and were leaving, they broke out in spontaneous applause.

"It brought tears to everyone's eyes," Didlake recalled.



PASSING INSPECTION — Honduras government officials (foreground) check inventories of food shipments from Mississippi while William Wright, (back, left) pastor of Rocky Point Church, Carthage, and Jim Didlake, Mississippi Baptist disaster relief coordinator, await permission to off-load the 40-ton ocean-going containers of food shipped from Mississippi Baptists to Honduran victims of Hurricane Mitch, described by some experts as the "storm of the century." (BR special photo)

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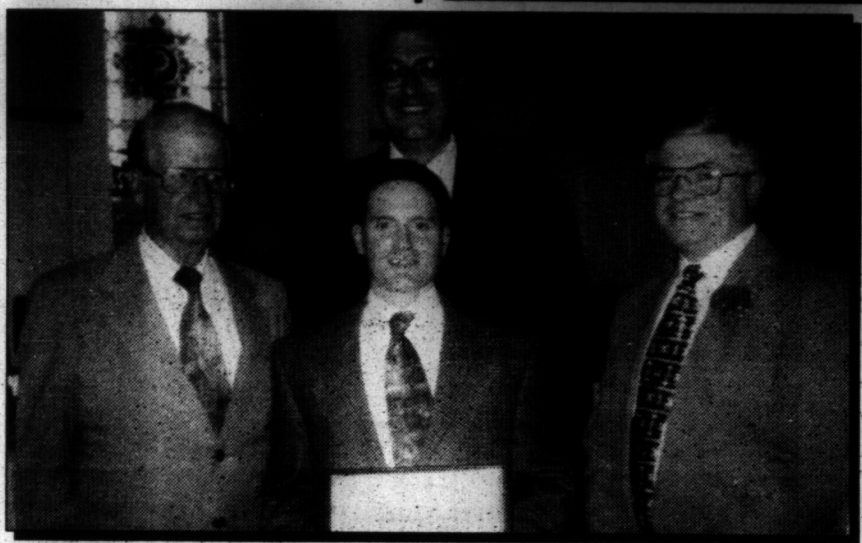
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NAMES IN THE NEWS



Benny Traylor was ordained a deacon at First Church, Byhalia, on Nov. 8. Giving the charges were Rowland Crawford, a third generation pastor; Glenn E. Bien, pastor; and Steve Delony, father-in-law of Traylor. Pictured (bottom row) are Crawford, Traylor, and Delony; and Bien at top.

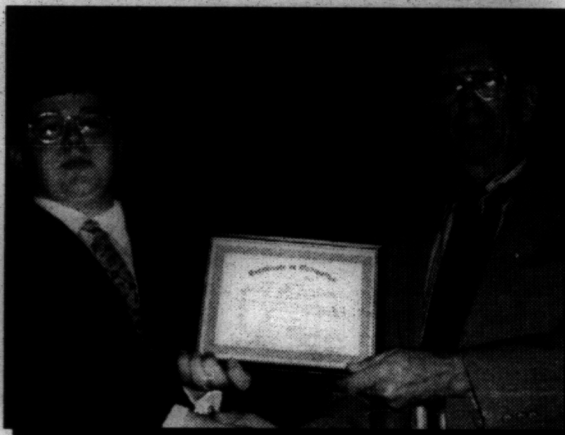
Keyboard Fests deadline looms

No late registrations can be accepted, and no changes of any kind can be made regarding Area Keyboard Festivals, after the deadline of Jan. 13. For more information, contact the Church Music Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

Kenneth Ray McMillen, 62, a native of Pontotoc County, died Dec. 7 in Livingston, Tenn. He was director of missions for Riverside Baptist Association and a member of First Church, Livingston. Services were held on Dec. 10 at Shady Grove Church, Pontotoc. Survivors

include his wife Sarah Brand McMillen of Livingston; daughters, Angela Anderson of Desoto, Texas; Lynn Campbell of Collierville, Tenn.; and Amy Carr of Livingston; son, John McMillen of Livingston; sister, Dorothy McCord of Pontotoc; brothers, Jack McMillen of Senatobia, and Gerald McMillen of San Antonio, Texas; and three grandsons.

Salem Church, Toomsaba, ordained C. Reid Vaughan to the ministry on Feb. 28. Pictured are Vaughan and R. W. Shelton, church clerk.



Vaughan and Shelton

New Hope Church, Foxworth, on Nov. 1 recognized its members with perfect attendance in Sunday School for the church year of 1997-98. Pictured are Luke Schallot, one year; Cade Campbell, two years; Kristie Clark, nine years; Justin McKenzie, one year;



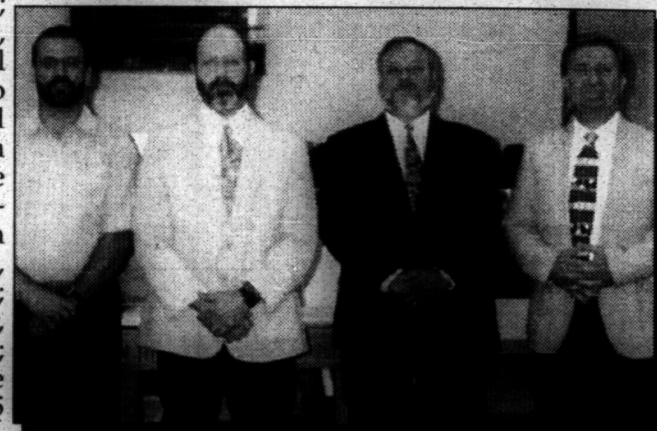
Members of New Hope, Foxworth

Chase Clark, two consecutive years; Bonnie Pittman, eight years; Sherrell Magee, 17 years; Taylor McKenzie, one year; Mitch Ratliff, seven years; B. B. Stringer, 43 consecutive years; Nancy Thomas, 16 years; Jimmy Thomas, 29 consecutive years; Karla Ratliff, seven years; Donna Ratliff, 17 years; Gail Campbell, two years; and Monica Stringer, one year. Not pictured are Alan Stringer, eight years; Beverly Kroner, five years; and Willie Blackwell, 15 years.

Kermit Andrew Aultman was licensed to the ministry by Victory Church, Bassfield, on Nov. 22. Aultman may be reached at 279 Hilburn Aultman Road, Sumrall, MS 39482 or call (601) 943-5094. Presenting the certificate to Aultman (left) is Clifford Rutland, chairman of deacons. Charles Broome is pastor.



Aultman and Rutland



Deacons of Calvary, Durant

Calvary Church, Durant, recently held Deacon Ordination services for Dru Farmer, Ronnie Burden, and John (Skippy) Ellington. Pictured (from left) are Farmer, Burden, Ellington, and Willie Bishop, pastor.

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BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS



WCC Students

William Carey College students who received awards at the Mississippi Music Teachers Association Convention held recently in Clinton were (back row, from left) John Clark of Hattiesburg, Beau Lang of Hattiesburg; (front row) Emily Watts of McComb, Alison Bennett of Jacksonville, Fla., and Barbie Jones of Greenville.

The Office of Continuing Education at Mississippi College is offering a course to assist teachers in achieving certification to teach gifted children. Special registration will be held Jan. 12 at Brandon High School. The Office of Continuing Education is also offering a course to assist individuals who are preparing to take the April 17, 1999, offering of the Medical

College Admission Test (MCAT). The course which offers 24 instructional hours of review is scheduled to begin Jan. 23 and conclude on March 27. The Office of Continuing Education and the School of Business will offer Real Estate courses scheduled to begin in the 1999 spring semester. For more information on dates and times, call the Office of Continuing Education at (601) 925-3263.

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Lepanto, Arkansas 72354. E-mail inquiries accepted at GWD@eritter.net.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



The youth of Progress Church, McComb, recently held a yard sale and raised \$400 to donate to Honduras relief efforts following Hurricane Mitch. The youth challenged the church to match what they were sending, and the church doubled the amount. The WMU sent \$100 and the church also doubled the amount for a grand total of \$1,500. Billy Ray Simmons is pastor.



Pastor Emeritus Day was held in honor of Robert E. Jones at Cedar Grove Church, Columbia, on Nov. 8. Pictured are (from left) Mike Grenn, pastor of Cedar Grove Church; and Robert E. Jones and his wife Mabel.



Drawn Together, a singing group of the Mississippi State University Baptist Student Union, is available for worship services, youth activities, retreats, and banquets. Members (pictured, from left, top to bottom) are Michael Winstead, Morton; Chuck Ellison, Woodland; Elizabeth Blake, Starkville; Ashley Gaskin, Verona; Kimberly Hankins, Tupelo; and Kellie Burnham, Kosciusko. For more information, contact MSU-BSU, Box BU, Mississippi State University, MS 39762, or (601) 323-5761.

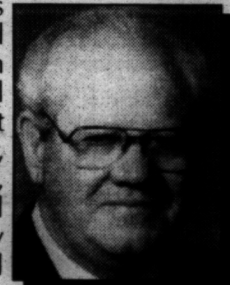


The Moores

Kilmichael Church, Kilmichael, honored Lavin Moore and his wife Pauline, as they ended their six months interim at Kilmichael. Moore, a retired preacher, has served over 15 area churches as interim. The Moores are members of First Church, Kosciusko.

C. Vaughn, 74 dies in Jackson

James Chester Vaughn, 74, of Jackson, former program director at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), died of acute leukemia Dec. 22 at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson. Memorial services were held Dec. 24 in the chapel of First Church, Jackson, with burial in Parkway Memorial Cemetery in Ridgeland.



Vaughn

Vaughn, an Alabama native, was a graduate of Copley-Lincoln Community College in Wesson, Mississippi College in Clinton, and New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) in New Orleans.

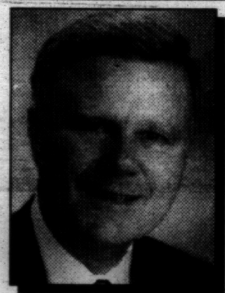
His 45 years of ministry included serving as minister of education at First Church, Hazlehurst; Gentilly Church, New Orleans; and First Church, Hattiesburg. He also served for 11 years as a Sunday School consultant at the Baptist Sunday School Board (now LifeWay Christian Resources) in Nashville before becoming MBCB program director in 1975 — the position from which he retired in 1991.

After retirement, Vaughn taught at Mississippi College and NOBTS. At the time of his death, he was Mississippi extension centers director for NOBTS.

He is survived by his wife, Evelyn Holifield Vaughn of Jackson; son Jim Vaughn of Crystal Springs; daughter Harriet Vaughn Gleason of Austin, Texas; and one granddaughter.

DON'T LEAVE CHRISTMAS BEHIND!

If you can find a day in history that anywhere near resembles this day and time, I would appreciate your showing it to me — a president impeached; a war being waged on the other side of the globe; a not-yet-elected Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives airing his dirty laundry; an announcement from Korea that an embryo from a human being has been cloned; an atmosphere of potential ter-



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

rorist retaliation that creates anxiety every time a plane takes off; and the countdown to Y2K which has provided opportunity for some people to line their

pockets more than light the way. Dear friends, it's a different day! To explore any of these topics in depth is probably an invitation to walk down a dark, dead-end street. There is no hope, there is no help. Chicken Little is loose in the farmyard and it seems as though most people believe his message is true.

It is a dark day! But wasn't the world something like this 2,000 years ago when God stepped in with hope, when the angels announced, "Fear not for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people."

The tyranny of Rome kept peace in the world with iron-fisted control. The corruption throughout the government was

more than historians can chronicle. Morals were low, fears were high, and hearts were empty. A ruler could put out a mandate to kill all the baby boys two years and younger, and the government could force people to make long journeys to carry out unpopular tax policies. The only way to travel was by beast of burden or on foot, and when you get to where you are going you may not have a place to stay.

Yet into that world, God sent his Son and Heaven made an announcement that makes a difference in everyone who responds in faith: "And his name shall be called Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins."

The masterpiece of God's redeeming work would be his Son who would forgive our sins and remove the curse of guilt and condemnation that rests upon us and bring peace into our hearts. It is amazing that, while then and now, people were looking for God to change the world, God was seeking to change a person.

So as we charge into '99 don't leave Christmas behind! Celebrate Jesus — the "Life Changer," the "Bell Ringer," the "Eternity Arranger!" We will need him in 1999. He did, he does, he will make a difference! Happy New Year!

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FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Love in all relationships

Mark 12:28-34; Luke 6:27-31; John 13:34-35

By Carl M. White

The Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, drew this conclusion about the three forces of life that so deeply effect us. "But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor 13:13). Love is the Bible's one-word description of the nature of God (1 John 4:8, 16). Love is powerful, able to bring hope to the hopeless, light to the darkened soul, and a smile to the most forlorn among us. The one whose love for us was demonstrated by his sacrificial death on the cross commands us to love others. In all our relationships, life will be enriched by the presence and practice of love.

Love God and others (Mark 12:28-34). A common scholarly practice of Jesus' day was to debate the greatest commandment. A scribe decided to engage Jesus in this debate, and Jesus' answer was authoritative: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, is the greatest commandment. Second, love your neighbor as yourself.

What is revealing, however, is what happens next. The scribe agrees with Jesus, and explains why he agrees (vv. 32-33). Jesus recognized this scribe's insight, declaring, "you are not far from the Kingdom of God" (v. 34). The pathway to



White

God's rule in life is paved with love.

In life we have horizontal relationships with one another, and a vertical relationship with God. They do not act independent of each other. One effects the other. Truly loving God opens the pathway to truly loving others.

Love enemies (Luke 6:27-31). The Bible records for us only one of Jesus' sermons, the Sermon on the Mount. In this great sermon Jesus says "love your enemies," and then identifies who is an enemy: "those who hate you," "those who curse you," and "those who mistreat you" (vv. 27, 28).

Practically speaking, loving your enemies means to do good to the haters, bless the cursers, and pray for the mistreaters. He then gives us four illustrations of this in action. If someone

slaps you, turn the other cheek. If someone takes your coat, give them your shirt also. If someone asks something of you, give it. If someone takes what is yours, don't ask for it back (vv. 29, 30).

This is a hard pill to swallow. Yet, when Jesus submitted to the Father's will and took our penalty on the cross, it was love at work. If we truly know him as Lord, should we not emulate his actions in our on lives? Loving those who love us is natural. Loving enemies is nothing short of supernatural.

Love one another (John 13:34-45). It is significant that in Jesus' last moments with his disciples, he gave them a new commandment. This commandment would be the identifying mark of his followers: "Love one another" (v. 34).

This love was not to be just any kind of love. It was not to be mere affection, though friendship is important in

God's family. Jesus said we are to love one another, "as I have loved you" (v. 34).

A logging company was having a problem. Logs were cut and then floated down river to the lumber mill. Thieves were stealing some of the logs and the company had no way of identifying the culprits. They tried painting the end of each log, but the thieves would merely cut off the end. Then the company came up with a dye that could be poured the length of each log, permeating it almost to the core. No matter how the log was cut, the dye marker showed through.

So it should be among the family of God. No matter how the world may cut us, the love of God should reveal who is our Master. This is how the world will know we are his, and that he is Lord.

White is a member of First Church, Clinton.

LIFE AND WORK

Sharing with the poor and needy

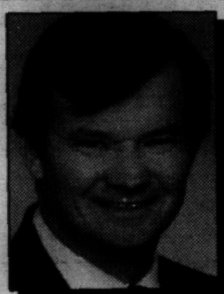
Lev. 19:9-10; Deut. 15:7-11; James 2:14-17; 1 John 3:17-18

By Hugh Plunkett

A couple of summers ago our church sent our youth on a choir tour/mission trip to San Antonio, Tex. to minister in homeless shelters and hold Backyard Bible Clubs in a high crime area. Scores of little children, many of whom came from apartments unattended and unclean, were in the Bible clubs. Our youth bonded with these children, some going so far as to buy special things for them. When the last day came, some of the children did not understand why we were leaving. Some brought clothes packed in

grocery bags, expecting to go home with us. Perhaps the most touching moment was when several of the children gave our youth their teddy bears and dolls; some giving the only thing of value they owned. During this week of service to the homeless we learned a valuable lesson — how to respond to the poor and needy.

God expects Christians to share generously and compassionately with those less fortunate. We should understand that poverty is not always the result of laziness or poor choices. Often the poor and needy are victims of the choices of others.



Plunkett

Provide for the poor (Lev. 19:9-10). God instructs his people to leave a part of the harvest for those in need. The "strangers" or "aliens" were non-Israelites who lived as residents in the land. In the society of the Kingdom of Israel, the notion, "if you don't

work, you don't eat," was not only enforced, but was respected by all concerned. Beggars and those too poor or sick to fend for themselves were not held with any degree of esteem. Even in this hard time, God graciously provided for the poor by instructing his people to give some of the harvest to them. The application for us today still holds true. Believers are to provide for people who are poor and needy instead of dismissing them, ignoring them, or seeing them as someone else's responsibility.

Overcome selfishness (Deut. 15:7-9). God blesses those who have a good attitude in giving, not merely those who give. He wants us to have an open hand, not a tight fist. God is not pleased by selfish deeds (v. 7) or selfish thoughts (v. 9). He is not deceived by schemes that appear to help the poor but are really self-serving. I hear that today's philosophy is, "Get what you can, can what you get, and then sit on the can." Our selfish predisposition is to focus on hoarding things for ourselves. Believers need to recognize that such greediness does not please God.

Give generously (Duet 15:10-11). God expects his people to give gladly and generously, not grudgingly. As a minister I sometimes get to see the reactions of giving by individuals. For the most part, it is with a spirit of gratitude and gladness they give. There have been times, however, when the gift was given with a heart less than cheerful. On those occasions I've been tempted to

ask the individual if they wanted the gift back. I can only imagine how our Heavenly Father feels when this happens.

Share compassionately (James 2:14-17; 1 John 3:17-18). Believers are to give evidence of their faith in God by sharing compassionately with the poor and needy. Some of the most compassionate people I know are people that have precious little to share in worldly wealth. I have members in my own church who would give their last piece of bread to someone else if they saw the need. This is not to say that the wealthy cannot be compassionate. I personally know individuals who have been given much and they share it liberally with those in need. The measure of compassion in a person cannot be measured by his bank account. It is measured by the love for his fellow man.

Plunkett is minister of music and adults at Clarksdale Church, Clarksdale.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Who is this? — Astonishment

Mark 4:35-5:20

By Dee McDermitt

Mark continues to unveil the truth of verse 1:1. He proves that Jesus is the Son of God by showing that he is Master of the natural and the supernatural world. The response is astonishment as people marvel at the his authority.

Astonishment at the calming (4:37-41). It was evening and the end of an exhausting day. Jesus and the disciples get in a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee. Verse 36 says that they took Jesus along "just as he was." What he was at this point was weary, so it's natural that he would find a place to sleep.

It was also natural for storms to arise quickly on this lake,

which is only eight miles wide and thirteen miles long, 680 feet below sea level. Strong winds and down drafts create conditions similar to a tornado and cause waves as high as 20 feet.

That's what happened that night while Jesus was asleep in the stern. Neither the wind, the rain, nor the violent rocking of the boat woke him. His faith in the Father kept him tranquil. The disciples were awake, though, bailing water and filled with fear. They woke him with a rebuke: "Don't you care...?" Weren't they there at his command? Why had he gotten them into this? He got up and spoke to the wind and the



McDermitt

waves and there was complete calm. He asked them why the fear and no faith. Fear and faith are opposites. They cannot co-exist. The disciples were terrified then because they were beginning to get a glimmering of the fact that this was truly no ordinary man. They had seen his power over sin and sickness. Now they were seeing his power over the natural realm and they were astonished and asked among themselves, "Who is this?"

Astonishment at the cleansing (5:1-3, 7-8, 15). On calm waters, they crossed the lake and entered the region of the Gerasenes. Gentiles lived in this pagan culture. One of the fertility rites they practiced utilized pigs. The disciples were good Jewish boys whose Jewish laws stated that several things could make one ceremonially

unclean, among them the dead, Gentiles, and pigs.

Imagine how they felt when the man who lived among the tombs came running to them as soon as Jesus got out of the boat. The man was demon possessed. He had supernatural strength. He was beyond human help and control, but he was still a human being. He was a picture of the kingdom of Satan: misery, pain, isolation and bondage.

When he saw Jesus he ran and fell down in worshipful posture. The voice that came from him was not his, but demonic. In one sentence the demon confesses Mark's main point: Jesus is the Son of the Most High God. This Caananite name for God, El-Elyon, is seen in Gen. 14:18-20. It is the first name of God that Abram used.

Here in this Caananite culture, the demons called Jesus the Son of El-Elyon, the Most High God. Supernatural beings

readily knew him, but his own followers were still questioning. Jesus sends the demons into a herd of pigs nearby. The herdsmen flee and tell everybody. When the people come out, they see the formerly demon possessed man clothed and in his right mind. Salvation always results in a changed life. What a picture of new life!

Astonishment at the witness (5:19-20). The people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region. He didn't delay and the man begged to go with him. Can you blame him? Jesus tells him to go back to his home and family. He was to be the only light in that world of darkness. He obeyed and people were amazed at his testimony. Are you the only light in your world? Your testimony about God's mercy in your life is the most powerful witness.

McDermitt is a member of Rawls Springs Church, Hattiesburg.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Ronny E. Robinson, Executive Director

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Arlington Heights Baptist Church



Rev. Ronny Robinson (back row), executive director of The Baptist Children's Village, accepted a check from Sam's Club of Jackson to help buy Christmas gifts for The BCV residents.



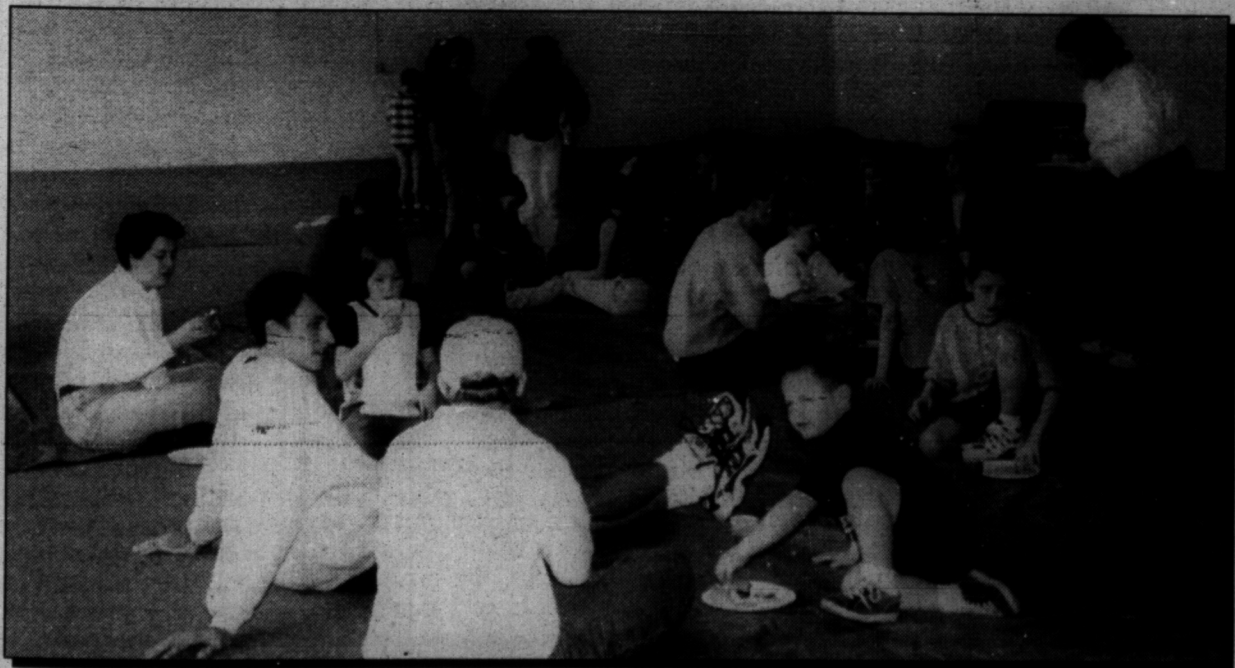
Mallory and Seth had a visit from Santa at a Christmas dinner provided by Wood's Family Restaurant.

Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.



The residents of the India Nunnery campus participated in a time of fellowship around a bonfire at the DiscipleNow weekend held November 6-7.



They youth from Johnson-Station Baptist Church led by Ms. Audrey Wilson recently toured the India Nunnery campus and provided an indoor picnic for The BCV residents despite the cold weather.

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Minister walks message across America

DURHAM, N.C. (BP) — Ted Stone might be called the John Chapman of Southern Baptists. Chapman, better remembered as "Johnny Appleseed," became known for his travels throughout the 19th-century Midwest carrying apple seeds in one hand and a Bible in the other.

So it has been with Stone, who recently completed his second coast-to-coast walk, sowing the seeds of the gospel and calling on citizens to focus on America's drug abuse problem. Stone is a longtime Southern Baptist minister who became addicted to amphetamines nearly 30 years ago, after having been a pastor for seven years. During his addiction, he committed seven armed robberies and even shot a man. He served four years in prison in the early 1970s.

Stone used his 3,550-mile walk — beginning in the San Francisco mayor's office and crossing nine states before ending in

Virginia in the Atlantic Ocean — to tell people how Jesus saved and healed him from such a destructive lifestyle. His message was heard by addicts, families of addicts, church groups, civic organizations, and schoolchildren.

"I thanked God for the grace and mercy he showed me during the walk," Stone recounted. "Then I asked God for a special miracle in the lives of all the hurting people I met along the way. Then I recommitted my life to the Lord. I said, 'Lord, I'll do anything you tell me to do.'"

Stone, a member of Grace Church, Durham, N.C., has a pretty good record with such promises. This was his second coast-to-coast walk devoted to sowing the gospel and drawing attention to the nation's drug abuse problem, the first in 1996 spanning 3,600 miles from Washington, D.C., to Jacksonville, Fla., then on to Los Angeles.

During his most recent trek, Stone walked six days a week and Sunday afternoons if necessary, wearing a red, white and blue "Ted Stone Walking and Talking" T-shirt or sweatshirt, carrying an American flag each step of the way and averaging about 30 miles a day. Two assistants, Philip Barber of Dallas and Mike Yarborough of Durham, followed Stone, setting up speaking engagements, doing his laundry, toting his luggage, giving him water and snacks and securing shelter when thunderstorms approached. Funds for

the trip were provided by love offerings at the churches he visited. He stayed mostly at Holiday Inns, many of which offered him a reduced rate. He does not know yet how much his trip cost, but his first walk across the country cost \$36,000.

The 64-year-old Stone battled 100-degree temperatures, endured four climbs to more than 7,000 feet in elevation and lost 44 pounds. He suffered through snow in June at Soldier Summit in Utah, rode a hot air balloon, talked with American Indians in New Mexico and stopped by a blues festival in Mississippi, sharing his testimony at each juncture. While approaching Fort Smith, Ark., on the Oklahoma border, he nearly collapsed from heat exhaustion — until he saw some Christian friends who were waiting to pray for him just a few hundred yards away.

Stone went through two pairs of New Balance sneakers during the walk, met with Ark. Gov. Mike Huckabee and two other governors, spoke at more than 200 engagements and collected 100,000 "Commitment to a Lifestyle Free From Drug Abuse" cards from people.

"It was worth all the pain if I've helped just one person," Stone said. "If the Christian church doesn't assume a leadership role in the war against drug abuse, then who will? For years the church had abdicated this to the secular world. It's time for that to end."



GOD BLESS AMERICA — Former Southern Baptist pastor Ted Stone celebrates in the Atlantic Ocean off Virginia after completing his across America to fight drug abuse. (BP photo)

Plans for seven-city YouthLink 2000 taking shape

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — On Dec. 28, 1999, Arizona Baptists will form a convoy of buses, church vans and other vehicles to move 1,500 students, statewide, to Anaheim, Calif., for YouthLink 2000.

The Hawaii Baptist Convention is running a half-page ad to encourage students to travel 4,000 miles to Houston. An N.C. church is checking train fares to Tampa, Fla.

These groups will be part of a massive migration across the country one year from now as 200,000 students (ages 13-22) congregate in seven cities to participate in a unique millennium event with a clear Christian purpose — YouthLink 2000.

They will be heading to seven cities: Anaheim, Atlanta, Denver, Houston, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Tampa. For two days and three nights — Dec. 29-31, 1999 — this unprecedented student gathering will celebrate this historic New Year's Eve "together," as the seven venues are tied by satellite.

YouthLink 2000 currently is securing top speakers (such as Buster Soaries, Josh McDowell, and Louie Giglio); musicians (including Rebecca St. James, the Supertones, Jaci Velasquez, Audio Adrenaline, and Out of Eden); and Christian sports figures/dramatists/humorists for each city. They will lead in heart-changing worship and celebration each morning and evening — with emphases on relationships, missions, evangelism and personal commitment.

One hour before midnight on Friday, New Year's Eve, 1999,

parents are invited to circle each venue and pray for the students as they "ring in" the year 2000.

YouthLink 2000 will be the single largest event for young people in Southern Baptist history. Its sponsors are Southern Baptist entities LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville,

International Mission Board in Richmond, North American Mission Board in Atlanta, and Woman's Missionary Union in Birmingham.

For more information about YouthLink 2000, call (888) YOUTHLK or check the Internet site: youthlink2000.org.

Mississippi YouthLink 2000 coordinators are Mark Lott and Don Lum of the youth squad/equipping team at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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CVWEG; VYO YAE AC

PAMBLQNIQL: WE WL

EGQ DWCE AC DAO.

QRGQLWVYL EUA: QWDGE

Clue: D = G

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Colossians Four: One.



Ron Mumber, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

I love my elderly parents but they drive me crazy. They tie me up to the point that I can't get anything done. What can I do?

Your parents likely said the same thing about you at some early stage in your life. Try to be patient with them. You have come to the point in life when your children are finally grown and you can look forward to reclaiming some time for yourself. Unfortunately, that's about the time many people begin to encounter problems with their elderly parents. Encourage them to sign up for church and community activities to the extent they can participate. Check into senior adult day care programs. Point out projects around their house that need to be tackled, and help them complete those projects. In other words, find ways to keep them active and involved without having to lean so heavily on you. I recall how I became frustrated when my mother became ill; I had other things planned for that summer and there I was having to take care of her. When she died, however, I was glad that we had shared that special summer together. Enjoy your parents while you have them. Set boundaries that will allow time for you to rest

and rebuild your energy, and look upon these coming years as a gift you can give back to them for having raised you from total dependence to where you are now.

All these revelations about the President have made me sick. It seems more and more of our leaders are falling — including church leaders. What's happening?

Sin, sin, sin. As we become immune to the stigma of disobeying God, we are more apt to allow sin into our lives. The more we concentrate on worshiping ourselves, the less we concentrate on worshiping the Holy God. Our culture has taught us — and is teaching our children — that tolerance of sin is more to be admired than righteous living. That's why Christians are often criticized for speaking up in public. Christians must make a stand for right living, compassionately and with love. Use Scripture as truth, not as a hammer. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). Let him speak for himself through your life and witness. In order to be taken seriously, however, you must put truth into practice in your life.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.